

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Hearing on the Nomination of Kurt M. Campbell
Opening Statement by Senator Richard G. Lugar
June 10, 2009

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Republican leader Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing:

I thank Chairman Webb for holding this hearing. The Foreign Relations Committee meets to consider the nomination of Kurt Campbell to be Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs. I appreciated the chance to meet with the nominee at length several weeks ago, and I look forward to working with him on numerous challenges.

As Assistant Secretary, Dr. Campbell would have responsibility for our relationships with more than 20 countries with a population of more than 2 billion. The range of vital issues he will have to address in this region is staggering. It was no accident that Secretary Clinton chose East Asia as the first destination she visited as Secretary of State. The Secretary's trip was a reminder of our essential partnership with East Asian nations on numerous issues.

The North Korea nuclear program is an intense area of concern for the Committee, and tomorrow we will be holding a hearing on the topic with Ambassador Bosworth. As we discussed at several hearings this year, our ability to address global climate change, improve energy security, and stabilize the international financial system depends heavily on our evolving relationship with China. As the new Administration develops its engagement strategy with China, it is vital that we maintain and expand our close alliance relationships with Japan and South Korea. We also must explore ways to elevate our economic and political interaction with the ASEAN countries. I am hopeful the President will soon appoint an ambassador to ASEAN, continuing a practice established in the last Administration.

Dr. Campbell comes to this position with a wealth of experience in the region. His background with the Department of Defense may be an important asset in developing working relationships with U.S. military leaders in the region. I congratulate our nominee on being selected by the President for this important post, and I look forward to his testimony.

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